Study of problems of taxes on highways

†1229. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to constitute a Committee for studying the problem of different types of taxes to be levied in respect of National Highways and for suggesting the measures to solve these problems;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (c) At present, there is no proposal to constitute a Committee for studying the problem of different types of taxes to be levied in respect of National Highways and for suggesting the measures to solve these problems.

Sanction to Sethusamudram Canal Project

1230. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's decision to sanction the Sethusamudram Canal project is based on the Environmental Impact Report done by NEERI;

(b) whether it is a fact that the report has very little primary data relevant to this project and lacks in-depth assessment of microbiological character and oxygen depletion during dredging of the canal which has bearing on the marine life and the livelihood of fishermen; and

(c) whether the Central Government would constitute an Expert Committee to assess the environmental impact of the project afresh?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The Government have approved the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project based on Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted by the Tuticorin Port Trust, the nodal agency designated for the project, after receiving environmental clearance by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. While granting environmental clearance, Ministry of Environment and Forests took into account the detailed environmental impact assessment studies for the project carried out by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) No, Sir. The NEERI studied all the environment issues including ecological study, in depth, over a period of two years, by collecting primary data including seasonal variations in the region. Changes in microbiological character as well as oxygen depletion during the dredging are not expected to occur as per the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) prepared for the project. While implementing the project, marine environment quality on physical, chemical and bacteriological parameters is being monitored continuously. In addition, a Monitoring Committee to assess the environmental impact issues of the project has also been constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Kannaiyan, Chairman, National Bio-diversity Authority, Chennai.

(c) No, Sir.

Collection of toll tax

1231. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of highways on which toll tax is being collected;

(b) the year till which the toll tax is proposed to be collected;

(c) the details of toll tax collected during the last three years, National Highway-wise; and

(d) the rationale on which the toll tax and the total amount to be collected has been arrived at?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (c) The details of National Highways along with the users' fee (toll tax) collected during the last three years are annexed as Statement. *(See* below*)* This amount of users' fee does not include the users' fee charged for projects on the National Highways implemented through Public Private Partnership (PPP). The users' fee is collected in perpetuity.

(d) The levy of users' fee is regulated in accordance with the provisions of (i) The National Highways (Fees for the use of National Highway Section and Permanent Bridge-Public Funded Projects) Rules, 1997. (ii) The National Highways (Collection of Fees by any person for the use of section of National Highways Permanent Bridge/Temporary Bridge on National Highways) Rules, 1997 and (iii) The National Highways (Rate of fee) Rules, 1997 as amended from time to time.